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Positive learning: A key to nurturing our future nurses

Pin Pin Choi and Mei Ha Tiu

Open University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Background & Aim: Nurses are important gatekeepers to patient safety and advocacy. Nursing students, our future nurses, are expected to achieve professional competence in order to practice as a qualified nurse upon graduation. Contemporary research, however, continues revealing an intense concern of nursing students over their unmet learning needs, as well as the presence of different barriers to learning. This study was intended to further examine the issue by delineating nursing students' experiences of learning

Methods: A descriptive qualitative approach was adopted. 14 nursing students from one of the universities in Hong Kong were recruited through snowball and maximum variation sampling. Both higher diploma and baccalaureate and junior as well as senior year students were sampled and they were invited to participate in individual semi-structured interviews to share their experiences of learning. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis.

Findings: Students were noted to have undergone a three-stage learning process: (1) Envisioning and ideating what nurses should do, (2) experiencing through clinical placement and integrating knowledge into practice and (3) engaging in self-reflection and realizing what nursing means. Six elements essential for positive learning at clinical, institutional and team levels were identified, namely: Role modeling, supportive ward culture, availability of learning resources, provision of integrated learning activities and informational and emotional support.

Discussion & Implications: The study uncovers an implicit process of learning, which may serve as a framework to guide future curriculum design and planning to better address nursing students' learning needs. The findings also add to our understanding of what facilitates the learning process and help to direct future initiatives in creating positive learning experiences for our future nurses.

Recent Publications

1. Choi S P P, Yeung C C Y and Lee J K L (2016) Beyond numbers and ratios: A study of the manpower shortage phenomenon in long-term care facilities for the elderly in Hong Kong. *Journal of Nursing Home Research*; 1: 45-46.

2. Choi S P P (2015) Patient advocacy: The role of the nurse. *Nursing Standard*; 29(41): 52-58.

Biography

Pin Pin Choi is an Assistant Professor of the Division of Nursing & Health Studies of Open University of Hong Kong. Her areas of expertise are on nursing education, management and research. She has experiences in conducting both quantitative and qualitative research and mixed methods research. She has published many papers related to nursing work environment, nursing shortage and student learning.

sppchoi@ouhk.edu.hk

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